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**Environment Department to Hold Public Forums About Dust and Air Quality
in Rio Rancho and Santa Fe**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department is interested in hearing your thoughts on blowing dust in New Mexico and will host Public Forums in Rio Rancho and Santa Fe next week. The events will be held as follows:

Rio Rancho: Tuesday, September 21, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Rio Rancho Public Library Program Room, 950 Pinetree Road SE in Rio Rancho.

Santa Fe: Wednesday, September 22, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Environment Department Meeting Room, 2052 Galisteo in Santa Fe.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets federal health standards to regulate levels of dust, or particulate matter, in the air that we breathe. High concentrations of dust in the air can result in worsening of air quality to the detriment of human health and quality of life. Although some industrial sources are required to use dust control, no other regulation of sources of dust has taken place throughout most of New Mexico.

The Environment Department is interested in your opinions about whether or not an air quality regulation addressing dust sources in New Mexico is necessary or desired. A new dust regulation could apply to a variety of dust sources, including, but not limited to, construction activities, unpaved roads and parking lots, agricultural operations, and materials storage and handling.

If pursued, a new dust regulation could apply statewide throughout New Mexico, with the exceptions of Bernalillo County and Indian lands. (The Environment Department does not have jurisdiction for air quality in Bernalillo County or on Indian lands.) Concerns related to dust sources in these locations should be directed to the appropriate authorities, instead of the Environment Department.

At the Public Forum, the Environment Department will provide information about health risks

associated with airborne dust and steps people can take to lower levels of dust in the air that we all breathe.

For more information, please contact Andy Berger, Environmental Analyst with the Air Quality Bureau, at (505) 955-8034 or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director at (505) 827-0314.

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